

# INTRODUCTION TO POPULATION HEALTH IN THE UNITED STATES (SOCl 172)

**Spring Session 2020**  
**Class Hours: MWF 2:30-3:20**  
**Classroom: Peabody - Room 0204**

## **Instructor Information**

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## **Course Goals**

The aim of this course is to provide you with an introduction to the study of population health in the United States from a **social demographic** perspective. Throughout the semester we will be discussing **four key concepts** that allow us to not only understand how population health is defined and measured, but how to apply this knowledge in tracking US population health over time, identifying the most pressing population health issues facing the US today, and evaluating policies designed to improve population health both presently and in the future. Specifically, the course is organized as follows:

1. The first section of the course will examine the basic ways we measure, conceptualize, and define population health, as we will be relying on these measures, concepts, and definitions throughout the remainder of the course.
2. Next, we will dig into historical trends in U.S. population and ask how geographic contexts shape U.S. population health.
3. Third we will study to what extent, and why, US population health is stratified by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, immigrant status, and gender. The stratification of population health, otherwise known as the study of population *health disparities*, is a huge and rapidly evolving area of study where sociologists and demographers have made significant contributions.
4. Finally, we will use our knowledge of trends and disparities to consider how population health in the United States might be amenable to change through effective public policy, beyond a traditional focus on healthcare. By this point in the course, we will be well-equipped to consider alternative options that policymakers should consider in efforts to improve overall US population health and reduce or eliminate disparities across subgroups of the population.

## Grading

	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of Total Grade</u>
• 1 <sup>st</sup> exam	50	10%
• 2 <sup>nd</sup> exam	100	20%
• 3 <sup>rd</sup> exam	150	30%
• Final exam (both new material and cumulative)	200	40%
• Other assignments	TBD	

### Exams:

In contrast to the writing assignments, the exams will exclusively cover material that is in the readings and material that is presented and discussed in-class (e.g., discussion, lectures, videos, etc.). **These exams are primarily a way for you and me to get regular feedback on the course**; as with the papers, they will help us understand what topics might need revisiting or further elaboration. The exams will consist of multiple choice questions, short answers, and brief essay responses.

**Your final course grade will be based on a 500-point grading scale:**

465-500 = A	385-399 = C+
450-464 = A-	365-384 = C
435-449 = B+	350-364 = C-
415-434 = B	335-349 = D+
400-414 = B-	300-334 = D
	<b>&lt;300 = F</b>

### Other Assignments:

Depending on exam performance and scheduling, there may be additional (and possibly optional) short reaction papers (i.e., 2-3 double-spaced pages apiece) or similar assignments where you will be expected to provide ***your thoughts and insights*** on readings, lectures, class discussion, and/or other class materials. Our goal with these papers is not to simply test whether or not you did your readings or “paid attention” in class; rather, think of it as an opportunity to question, critique, and comment on the information provided in the class.

You may disagree with how researchers present and/or interpret evidence, or perhaps have seen/read other work that contradicts or supports some of the issues we will be discussing. Maybe a particular issue is relevant to your own life, interests, future goals, etc, and thus you have an alternate perspective. ***The goal is to use these short papers as an opportunity for you to formulate your own informed opinions regarding population health in the United States.*** Importantly, however, I expect that these opinions will be supported by what the *best science* in the area is finding and how such science is interpreted in news media, reports, and academic research.

# Course Policies

## Note on Academic Integrity and Honesty/Dishonesty:

The Honor Code of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/> - covers issues such as integrity, lying, cheating, and other acts of academic dishonesty. All students must be familiar with, and abide by, the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code will be taken very seriously.

## Note on Accommodations for Religious Holidays:

Please notify me of a pending absence at least 14 days prior to the date of observance of a religious holiday. If you must miss a class or an examination to observe a religious holiday, you will be given an opportunity to complete missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## Note on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Any student in the course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact Disability Services as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. Please write or see me for any assistance with this.

## Note on Use of Electronic Equipment in Class:

To promote the most effective and least distracting learning environment in this class, electronic equipment – including laptops, cell phones, cameras, iPads, iPods, and any others – **must be silenced and stored** throughout each period, except when participating in a research-based classroom exercise during class. I encourage you to take notes by hand (and there's research\* to support its advantages!), but I will also make slides available after class.

\*Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological science*, 25(6), 1159-1168.

## Note on Attendance, Tardiness, and Leaving Early:

Regular attendance in class is very strongly encouraged. To promote the most effective and least distracting learning and teaching environment in this class, I strongly encourage you to come to class on time and stay until the end.

## Note on Class Preparation:

The course is designed such that YOU should plan on spending 1-2 hours preparing for each class (5-10 hours per week), depending on your pace of reading/writing and study habits. While challenging, the reading load is very do-able and most (all!) of it is interesting. I have tried to create a good mix of both academic and non-academic readings, exploring the course topics from a variety of perspectives and methods. I cannot emphasize to you enough to keep up with it on a day-to-day basis.

## Note on Email Communication:

I encourage you to use a greeting (e.g., Hello/Dear Iliya), complete sentences, a closing/signature (e.g., Thank you/Sincerely), and to maintain a professional tone when writing emails. Remember, respect given is respect earned.

# Course Schedule and Readings

*Always make sure to check Sakai/email for any changes;  
and pay attention to the page numbers!*

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READINGS FOR CLASS</u>
JAN-8	<i>Syllabus and Introduction to Population Health</i>	<b>The Syllabus</b> ( <i>duh</i> )
JAN-10	<i>Measuring Population Health I</i>	<b>Hummer and Hamilton: Chapter 1</b>
JAN-13	<i>Measuring Population Health II</i>	<i>Just lock yourself in a closet and stare at the Lexis Diagram in Chapter 1 for a few hours</i>
JAN-15	<i>Measuring Population Health III</i>	<b>Harris: An integrative approach to health</b> <b>Wolf: The Data-Driven Life</b>
JAN-17	<i>Measuring Population Health IV</i>	<b>Etches et al.: Measuring population health: a review of indicators</b> <b>Harris and Schorpp: Integrating Biomarkers in Social Stratification and Health Research</b>
JAN-22	<i>Measuring Population Health V</i>	<b>National Center for Health Statistics; Health, 2016: p.2-5;11-24</b> <b>National Center for Health Statistics Health, 2017: p.2-6;8-13</b>

JAN-24	<i>Trends in Population Health I</i>	<b>Hummer and Hamilton: Chapter 2</b>
JAN-27	<i>Trends in Population Health II</i>	<i>I doubt you spent all weekend thinking about population health, so it's probably a good idea to <b>re-read pages 40-52 in Chapter 2</b></i>
JAN-29	<i>Trends in Population Health III/ EXAM #1 REVIEW</i>	<i>Hopefully you've been reviewing for Exam #1, <b>so come prepared with questions/clarifications</b></i>
JAN-31	<b>EXAM #1</b>	
FEB-3	<b>EXAM #1 POST-MORTEM</b>	
FEB-5	<i>Geographic Patterns I</i>	<b>Hummer and Hamilton: Chapter 3</b>
FEB-7	<i>Geographic Patterns II</i>	<b>Re-read Chapter 3</b> (but if you were smart you took good notes the first time and can just look at those...)
FEB-10	<i>Geographic Patterns III</i>	<b>Hummer and Hamilton: Chapter 4</b>
FEB-12	<i>Geographic Patterns IV</i>	<b>Montez et al.: Explaining inequalities in women's mortality between US States</b>  <b>Montez et al.: Educational Disparities in Adult Mortality Across U.S. States: How Do They Differ, and Have They Changed Since the Mid-1980s?</b>

FEB-14	Geographic Patterns V	<p><b>Dwyer-Lindgren et al.:</b> <i>Inequalities in life expectancy among US counties, 1980 to 2014: temporal trends and key drivers</i></p> <p><b>Barry-Jester:</b> <i>The Health Care System Is Leaving The Southern Black Belt Behind</i></p> <p><b>Barry-Jester:</b> <i>Patterns Of Death In The South Still Show The Outlines Of Slavery</i></p>
FEB-17	Geographic Patterns VI	<p><b>Diez Roux and Mair:</b> <i>Neighborhoods and health</i></p>
FEB-19	Geographic Patterns VII	<p><b>New York Times:</b></p> <p><i>The Rich Live Longer Everywhere. For the Poor, Geography Matters.</i></p> <p><i>Where the Poor Live Longer: How Your Area Compares</i></p>
FEB-21	EXAM #2	
FEB-24	EXAM #2 POST-MORTEM	
FEB-26	Socioeconomic Disparities I	<p><b>Hummer and Hamilton:</b> <i>Chapter 5</i></p>
FEB-28	Socioeconomic Disparities II	<p><b>Phelan et al.:</b> <i>Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications</i></p>

		<b>Hummer and Hernandez:</b> <i>The effect of educational attainment on adult mortality in the United States</i>
<b>MAR-3</b>	<i>Socioeconomic Disparities III</i>	<b>Pampel et al.:</b> <i>Socioeconomic disparities in health behaviors</i> <b>Lawrence:</b> <i>Why Do College Graduates Behave More Healthfully Than Those Who Are Less Educated?</i>
<b>MAR-5</b>	<i>Socioeconomic Disparities IV</i>	<b>Chetty et al.:</b> <i>The association between income and life expectancy in the United States, 2001-2014</i>
<b>MAR-16</b>	<i>Racial/Ethnic Disparities I</i>	<b>Hummer and Hamilton:</b> <i>Chapter 6</i>
<b>MAR-18</b>	<i>Racial/Ethnic Disparities II</i>	<b>Phelan and Link:</b> <i>Is racism a fundamental cause of inequalities in health?</i>
<b>MAR-20</b>	<i>Racial/Ethnic Disparities III</i>	<b>Jacobs:</b> <i>We're Sick of Racism, Literally</i> <b>Resnick:</b> <i>The Racial Inequality of Sleep</i>
<b>MAR-23</b>	<i>Racial/Ethnic Disparities IV</i>	<b>Hayward et al.:</b> <i>Does the Hispanic paradox in US adult mortality extend to disability?</i> <b>Ramshaw:</b> <i>On the Border, Long Lives Despite Dismal Statistics</i>

MAR-25	<i>Immigrant Health I</i>	<b>Hummer et al.:</b> <i>Immigration, Health, and Mortality</i> <b>Hummer and Hayward:</b> <i>Hispanic older adult health &amp; longevity in the United States: Current patterns &amp; concerns for the future</i>
MAR-27	<i>Immigrant Health II</i>	<b>Hamilton et al.:</b> <i>Assimilation and emerging health disparities among new generations of US children</i> <b>Aviv:</b> <i>The Trauma of Facing Deportation</i>
MAR-30	<i>EXAM #3 REVIEW</i>	
APR-1	<i>EXAM #3: PART I</i>	<b>Socioeconomic Disparities</b>
APR-3	<i>EXAM #3: PART II</i>	<b>Race/Ethnic Disparities + Immigrant Health</b>
APR-6	<i>EXAM #3 POST-MORTEM</i>	
APR-8	<i>Gender and Health I</i>	<b>Hummer and Hamilton:</b> <i>Chapter 7</i>
APR-13	<i>Gender and Health II</i>	<b>Read and Gorman:</b> <i>Gender and Health Inequality</i>
APR-15	<i>Gender and Health III</i>	<b>Fassler:</b> <i>How Doctors Take Women's Pain Less Seriously</i> <b>Doshi:</b> <i>Why Doctors Still Misunderstand Heart Disease in Women</i>



<b>APR-17</b>	<i>Sexual Minority Disparities</i>	<b>Osperario et al.:</b> <i>Sexual Minority Health Disparities in Adult Men and Women in the United States: National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey, 2001-2010</i>
<b>APR-20</b>	<i>Population Health Policy I</i>	<b>Hummer and Hamilton:</b> <i>Chapter 8</i>
<b>APR-22</b>	<i>Population Health Policy II</i>	<b>Quadagno:</b> <i>Why the United States has no national health insurance: Stakeholder mobilization against the welfare state, 1945-1996</i>
<b>TBD</b>	<i>FINAL EXAM REVIEW</i>	
<b>MAY-5</b>	<i>FINAL EXAM at 8:00 AM</i>	

# REQUIRED MATERIALS AND READINGS

## A Note on the Readings:

Most of the key concepts in this course will be reviewed in the Hummer and Hamilton book, which you can think of as our core “textbook” for the course. However, I think it is equally important for you to “see” some of the primary research and evidence that helps us to better understand how we think about and measure population health. **I completely understand this material can be quite challenging, and that for many of you this may be the first time you have engaged with “scholarly” publications, but I am confident you will be able to understand the readings.** I have also done my best to draw your attention to only those parts of these readings that are *most relevant to our class discussion*; but I encourage you to try and read/skim the entire article and bring any questions to class. You will also find that I balance out these academic articles with non-academic publications and media. As you engage with these difference class materials, **try to think of differences in the presentation of the content, and who the intended audience might be.** I will be very interested to hear and read your thoughts on what you find most convincing and/or effective! This will also serve as an excellent starting point for class discussions, as I am sure you and your peers will have different opinions.

## Books:

Hummer, Robert A., and Erin R. Hamilton. 2019. Population Health in America. University of California Press.

\*\* Available at UNC Bookstore or Amazon.

## Articles: PDFs or links available on Sakai

Harris, K. M. (2010). An integrative approach to health. *Demography*, 47(1), 1-22.

Wolf, G. (2010). The Data-driven Life. *The New York Times*.

Etches, V., Frank, J., Ruggiero, E. D., & Manuel, D. (2006). Measuring population health: a review of indicators. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 27, 29-55.

Harris, K. M., & Schorpp, K. M. (2018). Integrating biomarkers in social stratification and health research. *Annual review of sociology*, 44, 361-386.

National Center for Health Statistics. (2018). Health, United States, 2017: With Special Features on Mortality. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

National Center for Health Statistics. (2017). Health, United States, 2016: With Chartbook on Long-term Trends in Health. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Case, A., & Deaton, A. (2015). Rising morbidity and mortality in midlife among white non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st century. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(49), 15078-15083.

- MacGillis, A., & ProPublica. (2016). The Original Underclass. *The Atlantic*.
- Talbot, M. (2017). The Addicts Next Door. *The New Yorker*.
- Dwyer-Lindgren, L., Bertozzi-Villa, A., Stubbs, R. W., Morozoff, C., Mackenbach, J. P., van Lenthe, F. J., ... & Murray, C. J. (2017). Inequalities in life expectancy among US counties, 1980 to 2014: temporal trends and key drivers. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 177(7), 1003-1011.
- Barry-Jester, A. M. (2017) The Health Care System is Leaving The Southern Black Belt Behind. *FiveThirtyEight*.
- Barry-Jester, A. M. (2017) Patterns of Death In The South Still Show The Outlines of Slavery. *FiveThirtyEight*.
- Montez, J. K., Zajacova, A., & Hayward, M. D. (2016). Explaining inequalities in women's mortality between US States. *SSM-Population Health*, 2, 561-571.
- Montez, J. K., Zajacova, A., Hayward, M. D., Woolf, S. H., Chapman, D., & Beckfield, J. (2019). Educational Disparities in Adult Mortality Across US States: How Do They Differ, and Have They Changed Since the Mid-1980s?. *Demography*, 56(2), 621-644.
- Diez Roux, A. V., & Mair, C. (2010). Neighborhoods and health. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1186(1), 125-145.
- Phelan, J. C., Link, B. G., & Tehranifar, P. (2010). Social conditions as fundamental causes of health inequalities: theory, evidence, and policy implications. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 51(1\_suppl), S28-S40.
- Hummer, R. A., & Hernandez, E. M. (2013). The effect of educational attainment on adult mortality in the United States. *Population Bulletin*, 68(1), 1-18.
- Pampel, F. C., Krueger, P. M., & Denney, J. T. (2010). Socioeconomic disparities in health behaviors. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 349-370.
- Lawrence, E. M. (2017). Why Do College Graduates Behave More Healthfully Than Those Who Are Less Educated?. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 58(3), 291-306.
- Chetty, R., Stepner, M., Abraham, S., Lin, S., Scuderi, B., Turner, N., ... & Cutler, D. (2016). The association between income and life expectancy in the United States, 2001-2014. *Jama*, 315(16), 1750-1766.
- Phelan, J. C., & Link, B. G. (2015). Is racism a fundamental cause of inequalities in health?. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, 311-330.
- Jacobs, D. (2017). We're Sick of Racism, Literally. *The New York Times*.
- Resnick, B. (2015). The Racial Inequality of Sleep. *The Atlantic*.
- Hayward, M. D., Hummer, R. A., Chiu, C. T., González-González, C., & Wong, R. (2014). Does the Hispanic paradox in US adult mortality extend to disability?. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 33(1), 81-96.

- Ramshaw, E. (2011). On the Border, Long Lives Despite Dismal Statistics. *The New York Times*.
- Hummer, R.A., Melvin, J.E., & He, M. (2015). Immigration, Health, and Mortality. In *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2nd Edition, Volume 11* (pp. 654-661). Elsevier Press, Oxford.
- Hummer, R. A., & Hayward, M. D. (2015). Hispanic older adult health & longevity in the United States: Current patterns & concerns for the future. *Daedalus, 144*(2), 20-30.
- Hamilton, E. R., Cardoso, J. B., Hummer, R. A., & Padilla, Y. C. (2011). Assimilation and emerging health disparities among new generations of US children. *Demographic Research, 25*, 783-818.
- Aviv, R. (2017). The Trauma of Facing Deportation. *The New Yorker*.
- Read, J. N. G., & Gorman, B. K. (2010). Gender and health inequality. *Annual Review of Sociology, 36*, 371-386.
- Fassler, J. (2015). How Doctors Take Women's Pain Less Seriously. *The Atlantic*.
- Doshi, V. (2015). Why Doctors Still Misunderstand Heart Disease in Women. *The Atlantic*.
- Operario, D., Gamarel, K. E., Grin, B. M., Lee, J. H., Kahler, C. W., Marshall, B. D., ... & Zaller, N. D. (2015). Sexual minority health disparities in adult men and women in the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2001–2010. *American journal of public health, 105*(10), e27-e34.
- Quadagno, J. (2004). Why the United States has no national health insurance: Stakeholder mobilization against the welfare state, 1945-1996. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 25*-44.
- Gawande, A. (2017). Is Health Care a Right?. *The New Yorker*.
- Gawande, A. (2011). The Hot Spotters. *The New Yorker*.